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Towards a Representative Bureaucracy: Promoting Linguistic Representation and Diversity in the Swiss and Canadian Federal Public Services

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1 Introduction[1]

Although situated on different continents and fundamentally incomparable in terms of the size of their population and surface area, Switzerland and Canada

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have one thing in common – both are multilingual societies (McRae 1983–1999; 2007). In societies of this kind, managing relations between linguistic communities poses formidable challenges. These challenges are often met by adopting federalist structures, which is the case in both Switzerland and Canada. Federalism protects the rights of minorities while instituting a certain national unity. It is a solution to conflicts in multicultural societies (Linder 2010) because it generally enables the various language communities to live together while ignoring one another (Knüsel 1997). However, this cohabitation in more or less parallel linguistic universes is impossible in federal public institutions where representatives are required to work alongside of and communicate and collaborate with one another. Federal institutions are a kind of window through which we can see the nature of linguistic relations as well as the conflicts and tensions that might arise. This state of affairs is not only the case for elected officials, but also and above all for the public service. Indeed, the public service is a central actor in the formulation and implementation of public policies and as such, constitutes an important sphere of power and is often caught up in the conflicts that characterize multilingual societies. Problems such as the bureaucracy's inability to serve the various linguistic communities in their own language, the exclusion or under-representation of certain minorities or favoritism displayed towards one language community to the detriment of another are important sources of conflict and resentment that can "seriously contribute to bringing the state's legitimacy into question" (Gagnon et al. 2006: p. 292).[2]

This article examines the way in which issues related to the participation of the various linguistic communities in the public service are managed in the Swiss and Canadian federal bureaucracy. It has a dual objective: on the hand, from an analytic perspective, it formulates a comparative perspective enabling an explanation of the differences in the respective approaches of the two countries; and on the other hand and in empirical terms, it presents the measures adopted and evaluates their effects. In this regard, this article seeks to contribute to the debate on representative bureaucracy, particularly in light of the fact that few studies have focused on multilingual states from a comparative perspective (Bangura 2006; Gagnon et al. 2006).

We proceed in three steps. In the first section, we develop the analytic issue through the lens of the theory of representative bureaucracy and lay out the conceptual framework of our comparative perspective. In the second section, we analyze the strategies adopted to promote bilingualism in Canada's central

2 All translations of French-language documents for which an official English translation does not exist have been done by the authors.

public service and multilingualism in the Swiss federal public service. The third section looks at the similarities and differences from a comparative perspective and presents a review of the strategies used in the two countries. In this regard, we focus on the evolution of linguistic representation and on the problems of multilingual functioning in the public services of both countries. We conclude by commenting on the factors that explain the observed differences between the two countries' respective approaches and propose a few avenues for thinking about managing linguistic issues in the public service in general.

2 Representative Bureaucracy in Multilingual States

Our discussion analyzes the relations among the various language communities in the public service through the lens of the theory of representative bureaucracy (Dolan and Rosenbloom 2003; Wise 2003). This theory focuses on administrative responsibility and postulates that the more the public service is a mirror of society, the more it is attentive to the demands and needs of the public. More precisely, the theory of representative bureaucracy rests on three main arguments (Kernaghan 1978: p. 492). First, it conceives the public service as a relatively autonomous and therefore influential actor in the implementation of public policies. Second, in opposition to the Weberian ideal-type of impartial bureaucracy, it holds that the behavior of public servants is influenced by the values they acquired in socialization processes that preceded their entry into public service and shaped by their belonging to a particular social group – e.g., social class, cultural or regional community, ethnic group, or gender. It follows, third, that the more the values of public servants generally correspond to those of the population, the more the decisions made by the public service coincide with public preferences. It is in this way that "the theory of representative bureaucracy begins with the principle that the various factors characterizing society in demographic, geographic, ethnic and other terms should be proportionately represented in the public service so as to make public servants aware of the various interests to be taken into account in the formulation and implementation of public policies" (Savoie 1987: p. 788).

Two strands of research have developed on the basis of this model (Calvès 2006: pp. 245–246). The first focuses on the representativeness of bureaucracy and the performance of administrative action. Studies in this vein generally seek to demonstrate that the more a bureaucracy is representative of the population, the more likely it is to serve it adequately (Meier et al. 1999). The second

strand of research concentrates on the legitimacy of the state rather than administrative action. Work in this area examines how the representation of various social groups in the public service contributes to promoting the acceptability of the state apparatus by these groups. This work reveals that this acceptability is based not only on the openness of the public service to the values and needs of these groups, but also on the symbolic impact of administrative representativeness as a sign that the legitimacy of these values and needs is acknowledged (Kernaghan 1978: p. 511). Although it is less developed than the first, this second strand of research is more relevant for the issues discussed in the present article.[3] Indeed, in multilingual societies, the issue of representative bureaucracy often evokes the issue of secession: "the groups that should be 'represented' in the public service are the object of a political definition...they aspire to (or could aspire to) having their own state or to being under the sovereignty of a state other than the one to which they belong" (Calvès 2006: p. 249). A representative bureaucracy reduces the risk of secession and as such contributes to national cohesion and to legitimizing existing state structures.

In multilingual states, the issue of representative bureaucracy evokes what Pitkin (1967) refers to as "descriptive representation." In this regard, theorists of representative bureaucracy have developed the concept of *passive representation*, centred on the issue of the extent to which the profile of public servants reflects that of the population as a whole (Rosenbloom and Dolan 2006).[4] The literature reveals that this cannot be taken for granted given that there are many subtle mechanisms that lead to discrimination against certain groups. In this perspective, the issue is first and foremost that of equality of opportunity: members of the groups to be represented must have the same opportunities for entering and having a career in the public service. This entails in particular the removal of hiring, training and promotion barriers to under-represented groups. The range of these measures is quite broad (Rosenbloom and Dolan 2006). They go from the formal prohibition of all forms of discrimination to setting quotas for disadvantaged groups (positive discrimination) and to selective incentives benefiting under-represented groups. Over and above equality of opportunity in hiring practices, passive representation raises the issue of social diversity at the level of public

3 Kymlicka and Patten (2003) argue that the lack of interest in this second approach can be explained in part by the fact that in the four most influential post-war societies (United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany), cultural or linguistic homogeneity has for quite some time been viewed as normal and quasi-natural.

4 The concept of passive representation can be distinguished from that of active representation, which seeks to analyze the extent to which public servants actively promote the interests of the groups they are supposed to represent (see Meier and Hawes 2006).

service departments. In this regard, "to be representative of society as a whole, the public service must not only include members from every group, but must also accept and even support the different values" (Rosenbloom and Dolan 2006: p. 257). However, this assumes that public service departments have a "business culture" that respects and values diversity, with a view in particular to preventing the frictions and frustrations that can arise from stereotypes and prejudices (Vidu 2000). It should be noted that managing linguistic diversity encompasses an additional specific issue: language is not only a criterion of cultural distinction, but it is also and above all a means of communication. In light of this fact, all multilingual organizations are caught between respecting the linguistic diversity of its members and their need to communicate, which, it goes without saying, is more efficient in a unilingual environment (Laponce 2001). In this respect, implementing linguistic diversity entails the capacity for resisting, if not countering "linguistic rationalization" (Patten 2001) which exerts a pressure towards monolingual communication. As such and in keeping with Patten (2001), we can define linguistic diversity within a public service department as involving the fulfilment of two fundamental principles, namely: the collective recognition of all official languages as legitimate means of communication; and linguistic autonomy allowing for civil servants to communicate in the language of their choice.

2.1 Comparative Analysis of Representative Bureaucracy in Multilingual States

The theme of representative bureaucracy is a pressing issue in many multilingual states. In most of them, many studies have been devoted to analyzing the barriers to linguistic representativeness in the public service and the effectiveness of the steps taken to improve it. However, few of these studies have looked at these issues from a comparative perspective (Bangura 2006; Gagnon et al. 2006). Yet there are significant differences among these states with regard to the measures adopted to promote linguistic representativeness in their public service and to manage linguistic diversity within them. How can we account for these differences? We argue that three main factors influence the way in which issues related to linguistic representativeness of public service are managed in multilingual states.

The first of these factors concerns the relationships and relations of power between the various linguistic communities. As Kernaghan (1978) notes, society is made up of a multitude of social groups, all of which could aspire to being proportionately represented in the public service. It is the demands of the groups with political influence that will be heard the most. As such,

we can postulate that the attention paid to linguistic representativeness in the public service is a function of the mobilization of the cleavages among the language groups present. The more the relationships among these communities are conflictual in nature, the more the legitimacy of a multilingual state will be called into question and the more it will be called upon to invest in programs intended to improve linguistic representativeness in its public service (McRae 2007).

The second factor concerns the pattern of democracy, understood here in terms of Lijphart's (1999) typology based on a continuum opposing consensus democracies to majoritarian democracies. In keeping with Turgeon and Gagnon (2010), one could argue that measures intended favor minority communities (e.g., quota setting) are more likely to be adopted in consensual systems, characterized by equilibrium and power sharing strategies, than in majoritarian democracies founded on the concentration of power in the hands of the majority.

The third factor is the linguistic regime or the set of rules and principles that govern the use of official languages in a multilingual state (Pool 1996). The conception of language rights is crucial in this regard, especially the distinction between the "territoriality principle" and the "personality principle" (Labrie 1997). According to the territoriality principle, the state imposes the language to be used in public communication in clearly defined territories. The personality principle stipulates that citizens are free to choose from among several official languages in their dealings with state agencies. As McRae (2007: p. 24) notes, the linguistic regimes of multilingual states can be distinguished in terms of the weight they accord to one or the other of these principles. For the public service, the principle of personality is more demanding. Indeed, it entails that public service departments be able to communicate in several languages, regardless of where they are located.

A comparison of Canada and Switzerland seems to be useful inasmuch as both countries contrast sharply with respect to these three elements of comparison. Relations among language communities in Canada are more conflictual; linguistic cleavage is more actively mobilized by sovereignist parties (Parti Québécois and the Bloc Québécois), and two referendums on the sovereignty of Quebec have been held (1980 and 1995). In Switzerland, the linguistic cleavage is not organized in the country's party system (Kriesi 1996) and secessionist initiatives have never appeared on the political agenda since the creation of the federal state in 1848. In terms of democracy pattern, Switzerland is a prototypical consensus democracy whereas Canada's British heritage has left it with the rules and habits characteristic of Westminster-type majoritarian democracy (Lijphart 1999). Last, with regard to linguistic regime, the principle of territoriality is one of the foundations of language rights in Switzerland whereas the principle of personality prevails in Canada (McRae 2007).

3 Promoting "Linguistic Duality": the Canadian Approach

According to the 2006 Canadian census, the breakdown of the population by mother tongue was 58% English, 22% French, and 20% other languages. The vast majority of the Francophone population has always lived in the province of Quebec, where these same proportions were respectively, 8%, 80%, and 12% in 2006. Since 1951, there have been two trends in the evolution of mother tongues. On the one hand, there has been an increase in the proportion of people whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, largely to the detriment of the proportion of the Francophone population,[5] and on the other hand, there has been an increasing linguistic territorialization inasmuch as the proportion of the Francophone population outside of Quebec has declined (McRae 2007: p. 17).

Only two articles of the 1867 Canadian constitution are devoted to language issues, with one guaranteeing the right to use English or French in the Federal and Quebec legislatures and courts (Article 133), and the other indirectly guaranteeing the rights of parents to have their children educated in English or in French via the protection of confessional schools (Article 93). Canada's current language policy was formulated in 1963 at a time when national unity was contested by the Quebec independence movement (Labrie 1997). Since the early 1960s, Quebecers have transformed their provincial government into a quasi nation-state, in which the objective of the then newly-formed Parti Québécois was full sovereignty for Quebec. Elsewhere in Canada as well, the Francophone community felt threatened by assimilation and demanded official recognition. In response to the dissatisfaction of the Francophone population and to ensure national unity, the federal government created the *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* as a means of finding solutions to linguistic conflict. The Commission's work led to the 1969 adoption of the *Official Languages Act*, by virtue of which the government was required to promote the harmonious cohabitation of the two language communities and acknowledge the equality of English and French throughout the federal administrative apparatus. The 1982 adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* marked a turning point in Canadian language policy (McRae 2007: p. 28). By virtue of the *Charter*, the equality of English and French was defined as

5 This trend is also true for Quebec. The 2006 census figures reveal that because of heightened allophone immigration, the proportion of the Quebec population having French as their first language was 79.6%, situating it below 80% for the first time since 1931.

an individual right and not a collective one for language communities. Fearing that the division of the country along linguistic lines would further strengthen Quebec's sovereignist leaning, the federal government came to favor the personality principle over the territoriality principle with regard to language rights, as was advocated by the Quebec government (Labrie 1997: p. 145).

3.1 Promoting Linguistic Duality in the Central Public Service

Canadian federal government initiatives aimed at promoting linguistic representativeness are generally viewed as a reaction to the emergence of the independence movement in Quebec in the 1960s (Wilson and Mullins 1978). These initiatives began in 1966 with the adoption of a decree concerning the right of public servants to choose to work in French or in English and the establishment of a language training program. In 1969, the *Official Languages Act* formalized the equal status of the two official languages for government departments in the National Capital Region and in bilingual regions of the country (New Brunswick, the Montreal region, ten other ridings in Quebec, and nine Ontario ridings). These rules and obligations sought to create a work setting favorable to the effective use of both official languages. In particular, they targeted work instruments and documents that had to be made available in both languages, the ability of senior managers to communicate in both languages and the adoption of adequate measures to promote bilingualism in practice. Moreover, the *Act* created the *Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages* (OCOL) to ensure the implementation of the objectives set by the legislator. In concrete terms, the OCOL was given the authority to conduct investigations and to lodge complaints regarding violations of the *Official Languages Act*. The OCOL is also responsible for monitoring the situation through annual reports about the state of bilingualism, which also contain suggestions for correcting identified problems. It should be noted, however, that the *Act* set no objectives with regard to the proportions of language communities in the public service.

To meet the objectives of the *Official Languages Act*, the government formulated a strategy for promoting "linguistic duality" within the federal public service. Since 1969, this strategy has taken the concrete form of programs and action plans (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages 2005b). Over time, a range of measures have been implemented with regard to hiring practices, mutual understanding and awareness (see Table 1).

The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer is responsible for implementing the *Official Languages Act* throughout the public service, establishing linguistic norms and official language monitoring. It is supported by the OCOL. Within each agency, *official language officers* ensure compliance with the law and

Area of intervention	Canadian central public service	Swiss federal public service
Hiring and promotion		
Language quotas		*Target values* Target values define adequate representativeness for administrative units (German 70%, French 22%, Italian 7%, Romansh 1%). In cases of under-representation, administrative departments can favor candidates from the minorities in question. Overrepresentation of minorities is permitted.
Linguistic profiling of positions	*Designated bilingual positions* A level of second-language proficiency is set for each of these positions. Language proficiency is evaluated at the time of hiring and re-evaluated every five years. A "bilingualism bonus" is paid to employees who occupy a bilingual position.	*Higher language requirements for senior management positions* Senior management positions require a good active mastery of two official languages and passive mastery of the third. If candidates do not have these language skills, they must acquire them within one year of being hired.
Promoting mutual understanding		
Language training	Language courses at the Canada School of Public Service.	Language courses offered by private schools.
Rules of communication	*Systematic external bilingualism* External communication (official publications, services offered to the public) must be provided in both languages (written and spoken). *Internal bilingualism* Limited to administrative departments located in the National Capital Region and regions designated as bilingual. In these departments employees work in the official language of their choice (hierarchical subordinates choose their working language), work material and tools available in both languages, and promotion of work environments favorable to the effective usage of both languages.	*Systematic external trilingualism* Official publications must simultaneously appear in all official languages. No rules with regard to oral communication. *Internal trilingualism* Applies to all departments in the federal public service. All employees have the right to work in the official language of their choice. Work materials and tools are available in all three official languages.

(Table 1 continued)

Area of intervention	Canadian central public service	Swiss federal public service
Promoting awareness of linguistic differences		
Campaigns	*Information campaign about the official languages* A campaign launched in 2007 to inform employees about their rights and obligations.	
Sensitizing senior managers	*Committee of Assistant Deputy Ministers on Official Languages* The Assistant Deputy Ministers are responsible for discussing strategic orientations with regard to official languages in the public service.	
	Official languages champions All agencies have a champion who must be a member of senior management. His or her role is "to increase the visibility of official languages within his or her institution."	*Multilingualism delegates* Two-thirds of public service departments have delegates. Their presence depends on sitting directors and the availability of a volunteer. Hierarchical status is not part of the required profile. The delegate is supposed to increase awareness about promoting multilingualism among his or her colleagues.
	Information brochures The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer has produced several brochures and tools for senior managers intended to promote bilingual functioning of work units.	*Information brochures* The Office fédéral du personnel (Federal Personnel Office) produced a brochure intended for senior managers which contained concrete measures for improving multilingualism in public service departments.
Inter-departmental experience sharing	*Good Practices Forum* The most innovative measures are presented at a forum held once a year by Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer.	*Language Delegates Forum* Multilingualism delegates from all departments share their experiences at an annual forum but do not make the results public.

(Table 1 continued)

Area of intervention	Canadian central public service	Swiss federal public service
Monitoring the language situation and evaluating implemented measures		
Monitoring	*Annual report* Each year the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages produces a report on the performance of federal agencies with regard to bilingualism. It also notes the 10 agencies that have received the most complaints for violations of the *Official Languages Act*.	*Reports to the legislature* Every four years the Office fédéral du personnel produces a report for the federal government on the promotion of multilingualism in the federal public service

Table 1: Measures to promote linguistic plurality in Canada's central public service and in Switzerland's federal public service (status in 2010).
Sources for Canada: *Official Languages Act* (R.S., 1985, c. 31 [4th suppl.]) and the websites of Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (www.ocol-clo.gc.ca), Canadian Heritage (www.pch.gc.ca) and the Treasury Board Secretariat (www.tbs-sct.gc.ca), consulted in November 2010.
Sources for Switzerland: *Loi sur les langues* (RS 441.1), *Ordonnance sur les langues* (RS 441.11), *Ordonnance sur la traduction au sein de l'administration générale de la Confédération* (RS 172.081) and the website of the Office fédéral du personnel (www.epa.admin.ch), consulted November 2010.

that public servants have the necessary language skills and provide their services in both languages. Moreover, each agency and all federal ministries are required to name an *official languages champion* who is responsible for promoting bilingualism within their department or agency and to make the authorities in the various agencies aware of the corresponding issues.

The approach adopted by the Canadian government focuses on promoting equal treatment for Francophone and Anglophone members of the population. The objective is give concrete existence to linguistic diversity in government departments, which is viewed as a necessary component of a strong and vital public service (Wilson and Mullins 1978: p. 534). In light of critics who viewed these initiatives as contrary to meritocratic principles and a form of discrimination against Anglophones, the government "simply replied that bilingualism in itself is an element of merit" (Gagnon et al. 2006: p. 302). This idea is also found in the *Public Service Employment Act*, which stipulates that official language proficiency is included among the necessary elements of public service appointments on the basis of merit.

4 Promoting the "Representation of Language Communities": the Swiss Approach

According to the 2000 federal census, the breakdown of mother tongues in the Swiss resident population is roughly 64% German, 19% French, 8% Italian, 1% Romansh, and 9% other languages. The Swiss linguistic landscape has been transformed largely through immigration (Office fédéral de la statistique 2005). High levels of Italian immigration in the 1990s led to an increase in the proportion of Italian speakers, and more generally, the proportion of non-national mother tongues has also risen.

From the time of the creation of modern Switzerland in 1848, German, French and Italian have been designated as the federal state's official languages.[6] Since the early 20th century, language policy has been based on the principle of

6 The main principles of language policy in Switzerland are defined in article 70 of the Federal Constitution. These principles include the definition of the official languages (clause 1), the principle of linguistic territoriality (clause 2), and encourage comprehension and exchanges among the linguistic communities (clause 3). It should be noted that since Romansh is not considered an official language of the Swiss Confederation, as is the case for the three other languages, issues related to its use and promotion are not discussed in the present analysis.

language territoriality, with a view in particular to maintaining the status quo in the territorial division of the various language communities. Defining language territories falls within the jurisdiction of the cantons: 17 out of 26 cantons are unilingual German, four cantons are unilingual French, and three are bilingual (French and German). Italian is the official language of two cantons. (One is unilingual Italian and the other trilingual – Italian-Romansh-German.) The distribution of the population by linguistic regions is 72% German, 24% French, 4% Italian, and 1% Romansh (Office fédéral de la statistique 2005). A comparison with data on mother tongues shows that Italian is often an "extraterritorial" mother tongue spoken by Italian immigrants who have settled in French-speaking or German-speaking Switzerland.

Switzerland is often viewed as a typical example of a country that successfully manages linguistic cleavages. The relations among its language communities are generally described as harmonious (McRae 1983–1999; Linder 2010). However, although they are not instrumentalized by political parties or secessionist movements, linguistic divisions have a "latent" existence (Kriesi 1996: p. 8) and have manifested themselves during precise historical moments such as during the First World War. However, it was in the early 1990s that these latent divisions acquired their most significant visibility in the context of important national public debates. In terms of foreign policy, French-speaking Switzerland, which is in favor of the country's international openness, is in a minority in public votes on the issue of integrating Switzerland into the European Union. With regard to public education, some German cantons have chosen to stop investing in the teaching of national languages in favor of English, which has led the French and Italian minorities to fear that they will be relegated to a second-class status. These debates and their results raise the issue of national cohesion, which is increasingly presented in ethnolinguistic terms (Grin 1997).

The debates in the 1990s gave rise to legislative efforts aimed at implementing a more active language policy. This initiative took concrete form in the 2007 *Loi sur les langues* (Language Act). This new language policy has three objectives: to consolidate national cohesion; to improve proficiency in the country's national languages throughout Switzerland; and to strengthen Italian and Romansh as national languages at risk of falling into disuse, if not disappearing.

4.1 Promoting Linguistic Representativeness in the Federal Public Service

German, Italian, and French enjoy equal official status in federal institutions. Although this principle is universally accepted, its practical application is the

subject of debate. The linguistic representativeness of the federal public service first emerged as a recurring theme in the late 1940s, essentially in terms of the underrepresentation of the French and Italian minorities, especially in senior management positions. The federal government responded in 1950 with a series of recommendations intended for administrative department managers, inviting them to ensure better representation of linguistic minorities at all hierarchical levels. Because the problem persisted, the federal government developed directives to ensure that linguistic communities were properly represented in the federal public service (*Instructions du Conseil fédéral concernant la représentation des communautés linguistiques dans l'administration générale de la Confédération*). These directives were extended through several successive reformulations (Weil 1995; Office fédéral du personnel 2009a). They set a very clear quantitative objective: the proportion of German-speaking, French-speaking, Italian-speaking, and Romansh-speaking federal employees must correspond to their proportion in the resident population of Swiss nationality, as indicated in official statistics, and this to the extent possible in all administrative departments (i.e., regardless of where they were located) and at all hierarchical levels. The 1983 revision introduced the right for all public servants to work in the official language of their choice. These two objectives were given legal force with the revised *Loi sur le personnel federal* (Federal Personnel Act) in 2002, which stipulates that employers must foster the equitable representation of language communities and promote the use and practice of the three official languages. The same objectives inspired new legislation which, in 2010, set target values for the representation of language communities in administrative departments (70% for German, 20% for French, 7% for Italian, and 1% for Romansh), formulated clear language requirements (particularly for senior management positions), and defined steps to promote multilingualism in the public service.

The responsibility for implementing this strategy was given to the *Office fédéral du personnel* (Federal Office of Human Resources), which drew on a network of delegates committed to linguistic pluralism (*délégués au plurilinguisme*) who provide support to authorities in promoting linguistic representativeness in federal ministries, agencies and offices. As in Canada, several concrete measures have been taken over the years. They currently include hiring, promoting greater mutual linguistic understanding, and sensitization to linguistic differences and monitoring the situation (see Table 1). The voluntary nature of these measures needs to be noted: administrative departments are free to adopt them, and most multilingualism delegates act on a volunteer basis over and above their normal duties. Nevertheless, two-thirds of the administrative departments throughout the Confederation have these delegates (Office fédéral du personnel 2004). Their visibility and institutional weight vary and depend on the

importance ministers accord to the issue of linguistic representativeness in their departments. However, the new federal legislation with respect to languages, which came into force in 2010 clearly strengthened the structures for implementing the strategy, in particular through the creation of the *délégué au plurilinguisme* position as a central reference point for the entire federal public service.

5 Comparative Review

Since the mid-20th century both Canada and Switzerland have adopted and implemented a strategy aimed at creating a linguistically representative bureaucracy. Corresponding measures were set in place in five areas of intervention: hiring, promotion, mutual understanding, awareness activities, and monitoring the situation (see Table 1).

In terms of hiring practices, the most notable difference between the two strategies concerns language quotas. (Canada has none.) In both countries, the severest language requirements have been imposed on senior managers. In Canada, "bilingual designated positions" require precise proficiency levels. The Swiss strategy involves the general expectation that all federal employees have passive mastery of a second official language and that senior managers have good active proficiency in a second official language and good passive proficiency in a third.

To foster mutual understanding, language courses are offered by both public services. Moreover, they both invest significant resources for translation services. The main objective of the translation system is to ensure multilingual functioning of the public service in its external communication activities. As such, it is above all external documents that are translated and not internal documents, which often remain in a single language.

Both strategies contain awareness measures. More elaborate in Canada than in Switzerland, these measures are aimed at increasing the awareness of employees in positions of authority with regard to the language problems and issues in the public service. In this regard, it should be noted that the Canadian approach contains detailed rules about official language use by public servants as a function of the hierarchical position. Among other things, these rules stipulate that job interviews and annual evaluations must be conducted in the language of the applicant or the employee being evaluated. In Switzerland, the rules stipulate that all employees of the Confederation may express themselves in the official language of their choice. The result of this rule is basically passive multilingualism, that is, conversations in two, if not three languages.

Last, both public services have implemented a system for monitoring the language situation and for evaluating measures taken. This system is relatively well developed in Canada. Reports are published annually and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages rigorously monitors the situation, verifying, for example, the ability of public servants to answer telephone calls in both official languages. Departments and agencies that perform poorly are clearly identified. In Switzerland, evaluation reports are produced every four years and are generally limited to quantifying the linguistic representativeness of the federal public service as a whole and summarily presenting multilingualism promotion activities.

Although the measures adopted are relatively similar in general, there are some fundamental differences between the Canadian and Swiss approaches. These differences concern the resources invested, which are much more significant in Canada than in Switzerland.[7] More important, however, they differ in terms of their underlying idea. In Switzerland, the promotion of multilingualism within the federal public service has always been viewed in terms of the adequate representation of the different *linguistic communities*. This representativeness is understood as a collective right of the territorially well-defined communities. As such, it is legitimate to define precise quantitative objectives with regard to the linguistic profile of federal public service departments. In Canada, the issue is cast essentially in terms of the equality of treatment of Anglophone and Francophone members of the population. In this view, promoting the linguistic duality of the central public service has to do with respecting the individual rights of Francophone and Anglophone citizens to use their mother tongue. Setting quantitative objects is not consistent with this principle.

5.1 Taking Stock of Representativeness

Since the adoption of the *Official Languages Act* in Canada, the proportion of Francophone employees in the public service has increased noticeably, going

7 It is difficult to quantify with any precision the amount of resources invested in language promotion in the two public services. Let us look, for example, at a simple comparison of the number of employees in the main agencies responsible for language promotion. In 2007, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages had 160 positions (full-time equivalents) whereas Switzerland's Office fédéral du personnel had only two full-time equivalent positions devoted to promoting multilingualism. Even when we take into account the number of employees in the public services of each country (around 197,000 in Canada and 37,000 in Switzerland), the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages has 15 times more human resources than its Swiss counterpart.

from 13% in 1946 to 21% in 1966 and then to 27% in 2004 (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages 2005b: p. 49). According to 2009 statistics, Francophone employees as well as senior managers were even over-represented in the federal public service relative to the demographic weight of people having French as their first official language (Table 2). It would thus appear that the measures adopted by Canada since the mid-20th century to promote the equality of the official languages in public institutions have been beneficial for linguistic representativeness in the public service. According to evaluations by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, this success can be largely attributed to the increasing identification of "bilingual designated positions" (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages 2005b). Since bilingualism is more widespread among the Francophone population, particularly those living outside Quebec, these positions are held for the most part by Francophone employees.

In Switzerland, the *Office fédéral du personnel* has only conducted regular analyses of the linguistic profile of federal employees since 1996. These analyses reveal that in overall terms, this profile corresponds to the demographic proportions of the three language communities, with a slight over-representation

	Canada			Switzerland		
	Population 2006[a]	PS 2009[b]	PS (sm) 2009[c]	Population 2000[d]	PS 2008[e]	PS (sm) 2008[f]
Majority official language	76%	69%	69%	72%	73%	73%
1st Minority official language	24%	31%	31%	24%	21%	21%
2nd Minority official language	–	–	–	4%	6%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2 Linguistic representativeness of the Canadian and Swiss federal public services. Definitions and sources:

[a]First official language spoken according to the 2006 Canadian census.

[b]Participation of English speakers and French speakers in the central public service (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2010).

[c]Participation of English speakers and French speakers in senior management positions (socio-professional category: management) in the federal public service (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2010).

[d]Resident population in the German, French, and Italian linguistic regions, according to the 2000 federal population census.

[e]Proportion of federal employees whose first language is German, French, or Italian (Office fédéral du personnel, 2009b).

[f]Proportion of federal management personnel (salary scales 30–38) whose first language is German, French, or Italian (Office fédéral du personnel, 2009b).

of Italian speakers, both in the personnel in general and in senior management (Table 2). However, more in-depth analyses reveal that German-speakers are very clearly over-represented in key senior management positions within the public service: German is the first language of the secretaries-general of seven departments; similarly, it is the mother tongue of 95% of heads of finance, 88% of heads of IT, 82% of directors of human resources, and 78% of office directors (Office fédéral du personnel 2009b). This portrait of a globally representative federal public service dominated by German-speaking senior managers has remained stable since 1996. Prior to 1996, occasional independent inquires had revealed interesting trends since 1938. In particular, the results showed that the proportion of French-speaking and Italian-speaking members of senior management has tended to decline since 1980 whereas it was over-represented beforehand (Varone 2006: p. 302). Against this background, we can better appreciate why there have been numerous parliamentary interventions decrying the inequality of career opportunities for French-speaking and above all Italian-speaking employees in the federal public service (Office fédéral du personnel 2009a).

5.2 Taking Stock Linguistic Diversity

The principle of diversity assumes that public service departments acknowledge that all official languages are legitimate means of communication and that employees can use the language of their choice in all the communication activities related to their function.

Several studies suggest that the linguistic diversity objective has yet to be met in Canada's federal public service. Despite the fact that the participation of Francophone employees in the public service has noticeably increased since the adoption of measures related to the *Official Languages Act*, the use of French as a language of work has not kept pace, and English continues to predominate in the organizational cultures of several ministries (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages 2005a: p. 56; 2009: p. 31). This state of affairs is due in particular to different levels of language proficieny between Francophone and Anglophone employees. Whereas Francophone senior managers are for the most part perfectly bilingual, their Anglophone counterparts are often bereft of sufficient French-language proficiency to communicate with ease. The tendency to use English is above all the case for meetings. This is the case even for meetings with a majority of Francophone participants because the Anglophone participants do not have sufficient mastery of French to follow the discussion. As such, there is pressure on members of the Francophone minority to enable more efficient communication when they are able to switch languages and are willing to do so. To be able

to resist this linguistic rationalization logic would require not only improved language proficiency among Anglophone employees, but also investing in an organizational culture that values the use of both languages. The following excerpts from interviews with Francophone public servants illustrate this state of affairs:

> Legally, one can use the language of one's choice, but in practice the problem is that when a document is important, the tendency is to use the language of the recipient in light of the importance or the urgency of the document. Moreover, we have to be more rigorous...[a]ll senior managers should really be bilingual, such that all employees can really use the language of their choice (Official Languages Champion, Gatineau).

> Since the adoption of the [Official Languages] Act, there have been constant improvements, important rights and gains...[b]ut there are institutions and ministries that are more English. As such, we have to ensure that meetings occur in both languages, that there are proactive measures with regard to language use. There are still improvements to be made in this respect (collaborator with the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency, Ottawa).

In Switzerland, the opinion with regard to linguistic diversity is not as negative. According to a 2004 survey of federal personnel, two-thirds of French-speaking and Italian-speaking collaborators indicated that they could communicate in their mother tongue at work (Office fédéral du personnel 2004: p. 3). A recent study of the initial language used in legislative measures prepared by the various federal public service departments notes that German and French are effectively used as languages of work, but that Italian is essentially a language of translation. Between 1998 and 2008, nearly 79% the Confederation's legislative measures were originally written in German, 19% in French and only 2% in Italian, with the latter generally being of lesser importance (Kübler 2009). In light of our own observations of the Swiss public service, we note that this state of affairs also prevails in oral communication. For the most part, meetings are bilingual (German-French) to the extent that there is sufficient proficiency in these languages to at least enable passive comprehension. The situation is different for Italian, which is generally poorly mastered by German and French speakers. In internal communications, Italian-speaking employees are very often forced to speak in German or in French, thereby requiring them to have higher language proficiency. Official trilingualism has thus been reduced de facto to German-French passive bilingualism, in which there is considerable pressure on Italian-speaking employees to fall in line, as the following excerpts from interviews conducted with employees in the Swiss public service show:

> One [Italian speaking individual in our department] speaks French and German well but she makes demands [for the right to work in Italian] all the same. But doing more

translations into Italian costs a lot. These demands are exaggerated. Most Italians can speak another language very well. This is a bit mean of me, but when one can speak other languages, one can adapt as well… We don't have the time to translate into Italian… French and German always, 95% into French in any event. We don't bother doing it for Italians because they can speak another language (Assistant Head of Personnel, Bern).

I once wrote the minutes [of a meeting] in Italian because it was faster (I had told them ahead of time). I don't think they were read… (Italian-speaking public servant, Bern).

6 Conclusion

Like other multilingual states (Bangura 2006; Gagnon et al. 2006), Switzerland and Canada have adopted strategies to establish the proportional participation of their different language communities in the public service. These strategies respond to a mobilization of linguistic cleavages that bring into question the legitimacy of national institutions, even though there are obvious differences in magnitude. In Canada, federal unity has been directly thrown into question by the independence movement in Quebec since the 1960s. In Switzerland, there are a few irritants in relations among the language communities, which have remained relatively harmonious. Although language issues have taken on more importance since the 1990s in Switzerland, their importance in Canada is much greater, which no doubt accounts for its more elaborate language strategies. In Canada, the promotion of bilingualism in the public service has been grounded in law since the 1970s and can draw on very significant resources (financial and human). The Canadian strategy is more constraining, more controlling and more visible. For its part, the Swiss strategy has for some time been characterized by optional recommendations and measures and by relatively minor resources. However, the new language legislation adopted in 2010 laid the foundations for a more constraining and active strategy in Switzerland as well. More recent developments suggest that the Swiss strategy is moving closer to the Canadian strategy with regard to the instruments set in place. Both countries have adopted measures for interventions in four areas: eliminating discrimination in hiring and promotion processes; improving mutual understanding; awareness of linguistic and cultural differences; and monitoring the situation. These four areas are key steps towards a generally more representative bureaucracy. Despite their similarities, there are still some fundamental differences between the Swiss and Canadian approaches, and since these differences are related to each country's respective linguistic regime, they are likely to persist. The Canadian strategy is based on the view that language rights are individual rights (Labrie 1997), and the objective

is to attain equality of treatment for Anglophone and Francophone members of the population in the federal public service. Doing so does not entail attenuating the merit principle to benefit the minority but, rather, to affirm it by eliminating discrimination and by valuing linguistic diversity as an asset. Described as a "liberal model" (Gagnon et al. 2006: p. 305), this strategy reflects the principles of social and political integration articulated around respecting individual rights, the same rights which also characterize Canada's language policy. In Switzerland, the central place occupied by language quotas – even though they are non-constraining values – reveals that the multilingualism issue in the federal public service is ultimately an issue of the "fair representation" of the various language communities. As such, the principle of linguistic territoriality becomes the collective right of territorial language communities (Papaux 1997), thereby legitimating proportional participation in state power in line with the premises of the consociational democracy underlying Switzerland's political system. In comparative terms, these findings make it possible for us to refine the hypotheses formulated at the beginning of this article. In both countries, political mobilization around language cleavages appeared as elements that triggered language strategies aimed at promoting linguistic representativeness in the public service. These strategies are designed to establish that the state fully recognizes linguistic minorities, and with a view to insure that the federal state maintains or regains acceptability in their eyes. However, the content of these strategies is strongly conditioned by the prevailing linguistic regime, which in turn is linked to the nature of the institutions governing access of various social groups to political power. As such, the Canadian strategy advocates equality of treatment whereas the Swiss strategy advocates representation.

Despite these differences in approach, both strategies clearly draw on the arguments of representative bureaucracy. They seek to improve the passive representativeness of language communities in the public service, both with regard to their proportional participation in the public service and linguistic diversity of administrative departments. With regard to meeting these two objectives, we can note that the proportional representation of language communities in the public service has been globally attained in both countries. In Canada, this success is clearly an effect of the adopted strategy, particularly with regard to designated bilingual senior management positions. In Switzerland, the predominance of German speakers in senior management positions reveals that despite efforts a selection bias persists in the hiring and promotion processes. The situation with respect to linguistic diversity, however, is mixed. In Canada, English predominates as the language of work in the federal public service, except in agencies located in Quebec. The objective of internal bilingual functioning is thus far from being met despite significant investments. Moreover, this observation is quite

paradoxical. Although the Canadian strategy is aimed at promoting "linguistic duality," its main effect has been to increase the portion of Francophone employees in the public service while at the same time the public service has not become fully bilingual. In Switzerland, the bilingual functioning (German-French) of the federal public service has more or less been ensured through passive bilingualism, in which individuals use their own language. However, Italian-speaking individuals are under strong pressure to communicate in French or in German.

As noted by Patten (2001), the tension between official multilingualism and the logic of linguistic rationalization can be found in both public services, suggesting that this aspect merits closer attention in studies of representative bureaucracy in multilingual states. Both in Canada and in Switzerland, the different levels of language proficiency among the groups are the source of this pressure for linguistic rationalization. The bilingualism of some individuals enables the institution to function monolingually and as such acts as a barrier to attaining linguistic diversity. We find here the perverse effect of the inequality of the costs of bilingualism, as noted by Laponce in his observation of the tendency of the stronger language group "to shift the burden of the acquisition and maintenance costs of two languages onto the weaker group" (2001: p. 489). Like French-speaking individuals in Canada, because of their minority position, the Italian-language community in Switzerland has invested more in learning a second official language. Because they are generally proficient in a second language, they are generally expected to change languages to enable more efficient communication.

In terms of representative bureaucracy, we can conclude that the challenges related to managing linguistic diversity are more complex than improving representation. Indeed, the issues related to linguistic diversity in the public service emerge out of deeper mechanisms involving the unequal relationship between the costs and benefits of learning a second language by members of the minority and majority language communities. As such, the success of initiatives intended to promote linguistic diversity in public service departments depends on their capacity to compensate for the effects of these mechanisms. Consequently, these strategies must target members of majority language communities above all. It is by improving their proficiency in a second (or even third) language that the right of minorities to use the official language of their choice can be achieved.

7 Methodological Appendix

The analysis presented in this article uses three kinds of data: secondary studies cited in the text; official documents (laws, regulations and administrative

instructions), the sources of which are also indicated in the text; and semi-directed interviews conducted in 2007 and 2008. Given the availability of numerous secondary analyses of various aspects of the state of bilingualism in the Canadian public service, the interviews conducted in Canada focused for the most part on bilingualism promotion strategy. (Twelve interviews with public servants from the National Capital Region who were involved in this strategy.) In Switzerland, given the almost complete absence of secondary studies on this issue, the interviews covered not only issues related to strategies for promoting multilingualism, but also the hiring process and language of work. (Forty-one interviews with German-speaking, French-speaking, and Italian-speaking employees of the central public service in Berne.)

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